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C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 003928

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [VE](#)

SUBJECT: CHAVEZ GIVES MARCHING ORDERS FOR THE REVOLUTION

REF: A. CARACAS 3506

[B](#). CARACAS 3622

[C](#). CARACAS 3826

[D](#). CARACAS 3834

Classified By: Stephen G. McFarland, Charge d'Affaires,
for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez laid out plans for his Bolivarian Revolution to a group of loyalist governors, mayors, and other officials November 12-13 in Caracas. According to an account of Chavez's presentation put together by veteran Marxist writer and Chavez adviser Martha Harnecker, Chavez tasked his troops with a "strategic map" for implementing ten major objectives -- a "leap forward" -- over the next two years. He ordered his people to work hard, be disciplined, and to dedicate themselves "heart and soul" to the revolution. Chavez acknowledged weaknesses in his movement, such as failure to communicate effectively the GOV's successes and to reform the bureaucracy. On substance, he outlined a foreign policy that explicitly seeks to reduce U.S. influence in the world. On economic models, he rejected communism "at this time" but called for a humanist economic model to replace capitalism. Caracas major daily newspapers published portions of Harnecker's account in mid-December. End summary.

Chavistas Hold Skull Session

[1](#)2. (C) President Hugo Chavez held a two-day workshop on strengthening his "Bolivarian Revolution" on November 12-13 at Fuerte Tiuna military headquarters in Caracas. He convened newly-elected and re-elected loyal to him, ministers, military officers, and other key officials (ref a). Post obtained an account of Chavez's address to the participants put together by Chilean socialist and revolutionary writer Martha Harnecker. The two major Caracas dailies published portions of the transcript in mid-December. Separately, post obtained a slide presentation supposedly from the event that generally tracked with Harnecker's account.

Mapping Out A Strategy

[1](#)3. (C) Chavez introduced what he called a "strategic map" for the last two years of his current term. He noted that since his release from prison in 1994 after the failed coup, he has always relied on a master plan to guide his political movement. He ordered every minister, governor, and mayor to develop their own action plans with quantifiable goals based on his guidelines. Chavez told the conference participants at the end of his presentation he would return the following day to hear presentations of their preliminary ideas for moving forward. (Note: The due date for the action plans was December 12.) Since then, there has been a steady stream of governors, mayors, and ministers delivering their plans to Vice President Jose Vicente Rangel, who heads a designated strategy commission that also includes Planning Minister Giordani, Director of the Office of the Presidency Vice Admiral Luis Alfredo Torcatt, and National Armed Forces Inspector General Vice Admiral Ramon Maniglia.

[1](#)4. (C) Chavez laid out ten major objectives during his speech (ref b):

1) Revamp social programs ("missions") to give "power to the people," with an emphasis on education, inclusion, and equality.

2) Develop a public relations strategy that effectively communicates the successes of the revolution to the masses and counters criticism from the private media.

3) Better organize grassroots movements that support Chavez, with an emphasis on mission participants, electoral committees ("patrols"), and local planning councils (a public-private council that works with mayors to ensure a "participatory budget process."). Chavez proposed a new Ministry of Popular Participation to oversee this objective.

4) Accelerate the creation of a state bureaucracy that ensures "social rule of law and justice."

5) Fight corruption via new anti-corruption police, prosecutors and a presidential anti-corruption office (under Vice President Rangel's supervision).

6) Arrive at the 2006 presidential elections in "optimal conditions" that guarantee 10 million votes for Chavez (there are currently 14 million registered voters). The key to this is continued issuance of national identity cards ("cedulas") without which, Chavez said, he would not have won the presidential referendum.

7) Strengthen Mission Vuelvan Caras (job creation via cooperatives) to create a new production model that relies on state-subsidized cooperatives and micro-enterprise.

8) "Make war" against outdated land holding practices by elite Venezuelans by forcing them to surrender large shares of their rural land. (Note: On December 16, the Chavista governor of Cojedes State announced the "intervention" of 16 major holdings of land in that state).

9) Recapture an "authentic" Venezuelan military doctrine that erases all vestiges of "imperialist doctrine." He called for redoubled efforts in the development of military reserves and of a military-industrial capacity.

10) Implement a "multipolar" international system (refs c and d) to counter the U.S. dominated "unipolar" world (see paras 8 and 9).

Work Hard, Study Hard, Be Disciplined

15. (C) Chavez told the participants they must support the revolution "heart and soul." He said the era of elected officials sitting in their offices and doing favors for friends, relatives, and party loyalists is over. He told mayors they are responsible for making the revolution work at the local level, ordering them to house and feed the Cuban doctors of Mission Barrio Adentro and to visit every day the education classes of the Missions. He promised the most supportive mayors funds for pilot projects, and warned that though he could not fire elected officials, he could do "other things" to ensure their loyalty. Chavez encouraged the participants to read philosophy and literature (he recommended "Les Miserables" and "Don Quijote") and be well informed on current events. He told governors and mayors to improve their public speaking skills and not to shy away from media opportunities. Chavez asked Rangel to keep track of positive and negative points that Chavez observes about each official's performance.

Weaknesses Still Plague Us

16. (C) Chavez raised several risks to the success of the revolution, comparing it to Accion Democratica (AD) in the 1950s, which enjoyed popular support but later abandoned its popular base. He noted that abstention rates among the poor in the October regional elections were higher than expected and warned of future electoral defeats if the figure is not reversed. He acknowledged that significant numbers of poor people voted against him in the presidential referendum, attributing it to a failure to convince them of the GOV's advocacy for the poor. He blamed incompetent ministers and stifling bureaucracies for prompting him to launch the missions as a kind of parallel government. He admitted the bureaucracy had misled him with inaccurate or biased information in the past and lamented that shortcomings in the

missions -- such as students and teacher not getting paid on time -- are exploited by the private media.

Opposition As Enemy

17. (C) Chavez advised his governors to include opposition mayors in their planning, suggesting that not every "adversary is corrupt" and might be better skilled at carrying out some government programs. Despite this overture, Chavez said most opposition governors and mayors would likely work against his "strategic map" and would

therefore have to be neutralized. Chavez said the enemy -- opposition governors and mayors, the private media, elements of the armed forces, and opposition deputies in the National Assembly -- will not rest and will continue to cause problems for the GOV.

An Anti-U.S. Foreign Policy

18. (C) In describing his "multipolar" foreign policy, Chavez revealed his deep suspicion of the USG. He said USG actions in Fallujah showed that President Bush would continue an interventionist, aggressive, genocidal, and savage foreign policy and that Venezuela should prepare itself. He predicted that the USG would increase its aggression toward him and would undertake new efforts to weaken the GOV. The USG, he said, would try to exploit his mistakes, create scandals, demean and belittle him, and try to develop opposition leadership to defeat him in the 2006 presidential race. He discounted the idea of a U.S.-backed coup attempt or assassination plot, though he said he is sure there are "crazies" in the United States that might try to kill him. Nevertheless, he mentioned the possibility of having to defend Venezuela from a land invasion by the United States and vowed to wage a guerrilla war against such an occurrence.

19. (C) Chavez said the strengthening of the four major poles -- Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America -- would also contribute to his vision for a new international system. He urged an embrace of Spain's new socialist government to take advantage of the rift between Spain and the United States. Chavez said the GOV supports the continued consolidation of the European Union (e.g., a strengthened euro) because it "weakens the position of the United States." Chavez also welcomed new popular leaders in the ex-Soviet Union, where he said the seeds of socialism and social justice are re-emerging. In South America, he spoke of the need to break Washington's influence over Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Chile, what he called the "Monroe Axis," by forming the South American Community. He said the decision to move forward on a pipeline through Colombia would allow Venezuela to export hydrocarbons to Asia and thereby resolve Venezuela's "geopolitical vulnerabilities" of having to export principally to the United States.

Communism Not An Option For Now

10. (C) On economic models, Chavez denied he is trying to follow a communist model because it would abolish private property, which he said he opposes. "No one knows what will happen in the future," he said, "... but for this moment it would be crazy, those who propose it are crazy." Chavez instead advocated a "social, humanist, and egalitarian" economic model. He said this kind of economy is a long-term goal and warned against utopian thinking. Despite his endorsement for private property, he vowed to strip idle land from rural landowners via executive branch harassment and the creation of new agrarian judges to challenge the authenticity of land titles.

Comment

11. (C) Harnecker's account is almost certainly an authentic, accurate rendition of what the President said. She enjoys special access to him as a chronicler of revolution in the Americas, and reportedly has an office in Miraflores Palace. That said, the account is no doubt intended to put the best face on the direction which Chavez's Bolivarian Revolution is to take. For example, Chavez's instructions for waging a "war on bureaucracy" are reduced to a single sentence.

12. (C) Chavez is the hardest working politician in Venezuela. He is making plans -- strategic and tactical -- to deepen all aspects of his revolution. Chavez used the meeting to make clear to the elected governors and mayors that they work for him; defections of the type that marked his first years in office will be dealt with harshly. The Chavez in the transcript is more candid than in public about his ideology, especially on foreign policy and economics.

13. (C) Chavez's remarks show a leader who is increasingly showing his commitment to shift Venezuela's political, economic, and foreign policy orientation towards the left. Rhetoric aside, Chavez -- unfortunately -- has a strategic direction, and is aware that he faces obstacles and contradictions in his movement. He may, however, be overreaching; Embassy will send septel its analysis of the weak spots in Chavez's strategy and how they could best be countered by USG initiatives.

McFarland

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